



Internet2 makes way for future Web users

Chris Maiers, October 10, 2004

Just as a child outgrows a pair of shoes, the world is outgrowing the Internet.

The creators of Internet2 are working with more than 200 universities across the nation — including Iowa State — to develop a faster, more powerful and efficient way of transferring information.

Iowa State was one of the original 34 universities to help create Internet2 and use the new and faster network.

Although its role in creating a network for Internet2 has passed, Iowa State is now focusing on expanding the network, said David Popelka, associate director of Academic Information Technologies.

"We are looking to acquire larger and faster pipes. That will pay off for students and faculty," Popelka said.

Pipes are a slang name for the fiber optic cable that is used for the type of connection Internet2 uses.

Fiber optic cable uses light instead of electrical signals to transmit data at a much more efficient rate.

Members from the California Institute of Technology recently sent 859 gigabytes of data, the equivalent of about 191,000 four-minute songs, in less than 17 minutes to the European Organization for Nuclear Research, a research site in Switzerland, according to an article on Internet2's Web site.

Things like the Iowa Environmental Mesonet, video conferencing in Howe Hall and the Iowa Communications Network make up some of the achievements of Internet2.

All of those sites and programs require a type of connection that is much more efficient than the current Internet, Popelka said.

Popelka said he wants to “provide the opportunity” for those who want to use or join Internet2.

Membership fees and costs exceed \$250,000 a year for the service, Popelka said.

The Internet in use now in the commercial and home sectors was originally developed by the federal government and universities as a revolutionary way to communicate and share information, said Greg Wood, director of communications for Internet2.

Originally, around 1,000 computers were expected to be connected.

However, the use of the original Internet found its way into the commercial and private sector.

Since then, usage has far exceeded any expectation, Wood said.

The number of connected computers has doubled each year for the past 30 years.

This demand is putting a premium on a faster connection for research purposes.

“It took roughly 25 to 30 years for Internet I to become widely used in the home and private sector,” Wood said.

Internet2 is still at least 15 years from being widely used in the commercial and private sector.

“I’ll be first in line to get an Internet2 connection in my home,” Wood said.

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